

Docker No.: RPC 0575 PUS
Serial No. 09/921,762

COMPLETE LISTING OF CLAIMS

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1. (Currently Amended) A stackable crate for holding and transporting products comprising:

a side wall integrally formed with a bottom surface; the side wall formed so that at least a portion of an opening in the crate at a first distance from the bottom surface has a larger dimension than the bottom surface; and

a drag rail formed on an underside portion of the bottom surface and positioned inward of an outer peripheral support surface of the crate, the side wall formed so that a top surface of the side wall would contact the outer peripheral support surface of a like crate stacked thereon,

wherein a first portion of an inner surface of the side wall at the first distance from the bottom surface is formed to reduce the dimension of the crate opening in at least one selected area relative to a second portion of the inner surface of the side wall at the first distance from the bottom surface so as to provide a tighter fit with a drag rail of the like crate stacked thereon.

2. (Original) The crate of claim 1 wherein the side wall is joined to another side wall to form a corner, and the at least one selected area comprises the corner.

3. (Original) The crate of claim 1 wherein the at least one selected area comprises an upper edge area of the side wall.

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4. (Original) The crate of claim 1 further comprising a plurality of side walls formed as an open-top box having four corners, wherein the at least one selected area comprises an upper portion of each side wall at each corner.

5. (Original) The crate of claim 1 wherein the side wall tapers outwardly from a vertical plane as the side wall extends upwardly from the bottom surface to enlarge a top opening of the crate, and the at least one selected area comprises a portion of the inner surface of the side wall formed without taper.

6. (Original) The crate of claim 1 wherein the side wall tapers outwardly from a vertical plane as the side wall extends upwardly from the bottom surface to enlarge a top opening of the crate, and the at least one selected area comprises a portion of the inner surface of the side wall formed with reduced taper.

7. (Previously Presented) A crate for holding and transporting products comprising:

a side wall integrally formed with a bottom surface; and

a drag rail protruding from an underside portion of the bottom surface, the drag rail including a drag surface that is the lowermost surface of the crate, wherein an inner surface of the side wall is formed to position at least a portion of the side wall over the drag rail.

8. (Original) The crate of claim 7, wherein the inner side wall surface is formed as a variable radius blend into the bottom surface sufficient to position a portion of the side wall over the drag rail.

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9. (Currently Amended) The crate of claim 7 wherein the side wall is a first side wall and is joined to another a second side wall to form a corner, and the inner side wall surface of the first side wall and the second side wall is contoured at a lower surface of the corner so as to form a contoured portion extending inwardly from the first side wall and the second side wall extend over the drag rail.

10. (Original) The crate of claim 7 wherein the inner side wall surface is formed at a lower edge area proximate each vertically extending end of the side wall with an inwardly extending taper.

11. (Currently Amended) The crate of claim 7 further comprising a plurality of side walls formed as an open-top box having four corners, wherein a lower portion of each pair of adjacent side walls at the corner is contoured to form a single contoured portion extending inwardly from each of the two adjacent side walls is formed to position a portion of each side wall over the drag rail.

12. (Original) The crate of claim 7 wherein the side wall is integrally formed with the bottom surface so that at least a portion of an opening in the crate has a larger dimension than the bottom surface, and another portion of an inner surface of the side wall is formed to reduce the dimension of the crate opening in at least one selected area so as to provide a tighter fit with a drag rail of a crate stacked thereon.

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13. (Original) The crate of claim 12 wherein the side wall is joined to another side wall to form a corner, and the at least one selected area comprises the corner.

14. (Original) The crate of claim 12 wherein the at least one selected area comprises an upper edge area of the side wall.

15. (Original) The crate of claim 12 further comprising a plurality of side walls formed as an open-top box having four corners, wherein the at least one selected area comprises an upper portion of each side wall at each corner.

16-24 (Cancelled)

25. (Previously Presented) The stackable crate of claim 1 wherein an inner surface of the side wall angles outwardly as the side wall extends upwardly from the bottom surface to enlarge a top opening of the crate, and the at least one selected area comprises a portion of the inner surface of the side wall angled less outwardly.

26. (Previously Presented) The stackable crate of claim 25 wherein a thickness of the side wall decreases as the side wall extends upwardly from the bottom surface to enlarge a top opening of the crate, and the at least one selected area comprises a portion of the side wall where the thickness is reduced less.

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27. (Previously Presented) The stackable crate of claim 25 wherein at least one portion of an upper edge of the side wall is vertically aligned with at least one portion of a lower edge of the side wall, such that the side wall would support a side wall of an identical crate stacked on top of the crate and such that side walls of identical, stacked crates would not nest one within the other.

28. (Previously Presented) The stackable crate of claim 27 wherein the side wall meets the bottom surface at a lower corner of the crate, the drag rail protruding downward from the underside of the bottom surface at the lower corner.

29. (Previously Presented) The stackable crate of claim 28 wherein an outer surface of the side wall is generally perpendicular to the bottom surface.

30. (Previously Presented) The crate of claim 7 wherein the drag rail protrudes downward from the underside portion of the bottom surface inward of the outer edge of the crate, the side wall meeting the bottom surface at a lower corner of the crate, the side wall further including a contact surface on a lower edge of the side wall adjacent to and outward of the drag rail at the lower corner, the contact surface dimensioned so as to rest on a top surface of a side wall of an identical crate.

31. (Previously Presented) The crate of claim 30, wherein the inner side wall surface is formed as a variable radius blend into the bottom surface sufficient to position a portion of the side wall over the drag rail.

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32. (Currently Amended) First and second identical stacked crates for holding and transporting products each comprising:

a side wall integrally formed with a bottom surface, an inner surface of the side wall moving outwardly from a vertical plane as the side wall extends upwardly from the bottom surface to enlarge an opening of the crate at a first distance from the bottom surface, at least one selected area of the side wall at the first distance from the bottom surface comprising a first portion of the inner surface of the side wall formed to reduce the dimension of the crate opening at the at least one selected area relative to a second portion of the inner surface of the side wall at the first distance from the bottom surface;

a drag rail extending from an underside portion of the bottom surface, the drag rail positioned inward of an outer peripheral edge of the crate; and

the first crate supported on a top surface of the side wall of the second crate with the drag rail of the first crate positioned inward of the side wall and the at least one selected area of the second crate so as to provide a tighter fit between the drag rail of the first crate and the at least one selected area of the second crate.

33. (Previously Presented) The first and second crates of claim 32 wherein the side wall of the first crate is positioned directly on top of and supported by the side wall of the second crate, and wherein the drag rail of the first crate is positioned adjacent the side wall of the second crate.

34. (Previously Presented) The first and second crates of claim 33 wherein at least a portion of the side wall of the first crate is positioned directly on top of both the side wall of the second crate and the drag rail of the first crate.

35. (Currently Amended) A stackable crate for holding and transporting products comprising:

a plurality of side walls generally perpendicular to and integrally formed with a bottom surface, an inner surface of each of the side walls moving outwardly from a vertical plane as the side wall extends upwardly from the bottom surface to enlarge an upper opening of the crate at a first distance from the bottom surface, at least one portion of an upper edge of each of the side walls being vertically aligned with at least one portion of a lower edge of the each of the side walls; and

a drag rail formed on an underside portion of the bottom surface and positioned inward of an outer periphery of the lower edges of the plurality of side walls,

wherein a first portion of the inner surface of at least one of the side walls is formed to reduce the dimension of the upper opening of the crate in at least one selected area at the first distance from the bottom surface relative to a second portion of the inner surface at the first distance from the bottom surface. so as to provide a tighter fit with a drag rail of an identical crate stacked thereon.

36. (Previously Presented) The stackable crate of claim 35 wherein a thickness of each of the side walls is reduced as the side wall extends upwardly from the bottom surface.

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37. (Currently Amended) The stackable crate of claim 36 wherein the at least one selected area is formed reducing the thickness of the side wall less at the at least one selected area at the first distance from the bottom surface than at the second portion of the inner surface at the first distance from the bottom surface.

38. (Previously Presented) The stackable crate of claim 36 wherein the inner surface of each of the side walls is formed to position at least a portion of the side wall over the drag rail.

39. (Previously Presented) The stackable crate of claim 38, wherein the inner surface of the side wall is formed as a variable radius blend into the bottom surface sufficient to position a portion of the side wall over the drag rail.

40. (Previously Presented) The stackable crate of claim 1 wherein the drag rail protrudes downwardly from the underside portion of the bottom surface and wherein the drag rail includes drag surface that is a lowermost surface of the crate.

41. (New) The stackable crate of claim 1 wherein the crate includes an inner peripheral surface at the first distance from the bottom surface, and wherein the at least one selected area is formed on the inner peripheral surface such that the at least one area reduces the dimension of the crate opening relative to a portion of the inner peripheral surface adjacent the at least one area at the first distance from the bottom surface.

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42. (New) The stackable crate of claim 1 wherein the crate includes a generally rectangular inner peripheral surface at the first distance from the bottom surface, wherein at least a portion of the inner peripheral surface has a larger inner dimension than the bottom surface, and wherein the at least one area protrudes inwardly from the generally rectangular inner peripheral surface at the first distance from the bottom surface.

43. (New) The stackable crate of claim 42 wherein the side wall is joined to another side wall to form a corner, the at least one selected area comprises the corner and wherein the at least one area protrudes inwardly from the corner.

44. (New) The crate of claim 7 wherein the drag rail extends at least substantially parallel to the side wall.

45. (New) The crate of claim 7 wherein the drag rail extends along at least substantially the entire length of the side wall.

46. (New) The crate of claim 45 wherein the drag rail extends at least substantially parallel to the side wall.

47. (New) The crate of claim 7 wherein the drag rail includes a corner portion.
